



# AFTER FIFTY YEARS

*By*  
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*of the*  
Virginia Conference  
Methodist Episcopal Church, South

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1870  
Aged 22 yrs.

REV. D. G. C. BUTTS



1920  
Aged 72 yrs.



Hilton Village M. E. Church, South, erected 1920

## FOREWORD

THE VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, which met at Epworth Church, Norfolk, Va., November 4, 1920, will long be remembered for the many able and notable addresses delivered during its session.

Among these addresses none gave more delight and genuine pleasure than the Semi-Centennial Address of Rev. Daniel G. C. Butts.

It is a source of great satisfaction to the writer of these forewords that he urged Brother Butts to prepare the address, and assured him that suitable arrangement would be made for its delivery before the Conference.

The reader will miss the personality of Brother Butts in its delivery, but I feel assured each one into whose hand it may fall will find pleasure and profit in the reading.

The VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE has a most notable history. A historian should be selected by the Conference, who should arrange for addresses at each session of the Conference on *Places and Events* which have marked the progress and growth of the Church within her bounds. This would preserve most valuable information for future generations. It is to be hoped that this Address will lead to this end.

(Signed) JAMES C. REED.

*Bedford, Va., Nov. 26, 1920.*

# AFTER FIFTY YEARS

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A Semi-Centennial Address before the Virginia Conference is quite an unusual experience in my career. This is the first time I have ever been called upon to perform such a task, and, as it may be the last, I shall try to discharge this duty with the highest appreciation of its significance.

I am moved by the profoundest emotions. While I confess my long-cherished hope that I would be permitted by a kind Providence to stand in this place at the end of fifty years, yet, now that I have really arrived, I must acknowledge my unworthiness; and I pause to declare my sincere regret that I have not been worth to my Church, and to my Conference, that which I have received at their hands—patient consideration, fraternal affection, good appointments, and help of every sort throughout my ministry. Permit me to add, in all sincerity, my best friends have been those who have been careful to keep me out of places too large for me. They knew me well enough to believe that a spill from the muzzle would result from loading a single Enfield ball into an eight-inch howitzer.

I have meddled with my appointment only three times in fifty years, and met with astonishing success each time, receiving the very appointment I *needed*. Twice I requested removal, and received in both instances, at the hands of the lamented Bishop Galloway, an appointment which brought joy to a number of the people I left behind. There are brethren here who can make a great many people happy if they would. Once I wrote a Presiding Elder, when I knew the law of limitation would move me, that it would give me great pleasure if I could be assigned to a certain place on his district. He replied in a very kindly letter that he “would give it consideration.” He must have “taken it to the Lord in prayer,” and received the answer “Meddle not with the dreams of a fool,”

for I was sent to another place "for my health," and did some of the best work of my life! That brother is present now, and I shall take this public method of thanking him, as the servant of the Lord, for *not* giving me a place suited to a larger man than I and some others, to whom that congregation has had the hard luck to listen for many a weary Sabbath.

This reminds me of the lamentation of a certain luckless itinerant who spent his whole ministry, well nigh, *looking up*, but *getting nothing*. He writes:

"Ah! many a day I've stood and looked serene  
Into the calm and frigid eyes of Elders dear;  
Ah! many a day I've toiled and gotten lean  
From passing ham and fish to Elders dear,  
And I have long been hungry for a title clear  
To some big church, where I could stretch myself,  
And feed, with giraffe neck and nose, in hay  
Pitched in a church rack away up out of reach  
Where clerical yearlings never graze, and runt ecclesiastics never root.  
But all in vain! The dearly beloved Elders saw me not,  
Nor heard the plaintive pleading of my longing soul."

If I have never had the privilege of serving in the precarious elevation known as the Presiding Eldership, I have been the next thing to it. I had the great honor of recommending two very promising lads from the back country for important posts at the front. It was this way: When I was stationed at Wright Memorial, Portsmouth, and Dr. J. C. Reed was my Presiding Elder, he asked me to find him a man each for two strategic points in Norfolk City. "Why," said I, "the thing is easy enough. Go out yonder in the woods, and transplant those sturdy, successful men, R. H. Potts in Essex, and put him at Asbury (now LeKies Memorial), and W. H. Edwards at Bethany, and put him at McKendree." He did that very thing, and now behold the record of these two men, and tell me if I made a mistake? Each has worked himself out of the pastorate into the Eldership. If they had remained in the field where my judgment assigned them, no one can tell to what heights of fame they might have climbed. But now, alas! no one is wise

enough to predict their future. Dr. Edwards once said to me in confidence, with mouth to ear and at low breath, he very much feared that if he remained in the Eldership much longer he would not have a friend in the Conference. Brother Potts is speechless, but his is a dignified silence, superinduced by the heavy responsibilities of Assistant Bishop of a Metropolitan District.

I have never wanted to be a Presiding Elder more than two or three times in all my long career; and these up-reaching aspirations did not come upon me during the session of Conference. I had the feeling during the year when I saw men loafing on a good job, sitting around talking unprofitable talk wasting precious days which might have been devoted to the edification of the church, the comforting of the saints, or planning work for scores of church members who longed for employment on the walls of Zion. Understand me, brethren, I am bringing no "railing accusation" against any man. As soon as I *got busy on my own job* I overlooked these "spots in our feast of love," whilst the entire Conference assumed the thrilling aspect of a great army pushing on to victory. Then the wish to be a Presiding Elder, or looking about for a better place, was swallowed up in the charm and seriousness of the work at hand. Moral: *To drive away discontent, be diligent in working the job you have.*

I have sat in this Conference under the presidency of twenty-two bishops, namely, Bishops Robert Paine, H. N. McTyeire, H. H. Kavanaugh, and R. K. Hargrove, twice each; Bishops E. M. Marvin, David S. Doggett, Wm. M. Wightman, Jos. S. Key, A. G. Haygood, O. P. Fitzgerald, H. C. Morrison, Collins Denny, W. A. Candler, and E. E. Hoss, once each; Bishops Geo. F. Pierce, John C. Granbery, and John C. Kilgo, thrice each. Bishop W. W. Duncan, four times; Bishop John C. Keener, five times; and Bishops A. W. Wilson and E. R. Hendrix, six times. Counting the first and this, fifty-one sessions.

I have never gotten very close to the Bishops; howbeit, some of them have *gotten very close to me*. In that mysterious con-

clave, known to the waiting and debating preachers as the "Cabinet," where the boring apparatus goes down into the depths of a Methodist preacher's "gifts, grace and usefulness," and where the backbone of a certain place is carefully examined to determine whether, or not, there is sufficient strength in the material and spiritual vetebrae to carry the impending load twelve months, my "case" has been considered annually through all these years, along with other seekers for a home where the movable rubbish can be stored, and the "precious jewels" introduced to an anxious congregation. But with all my modest waiting and polite appeal, I have never learned but once what had been said of me in that august tribunal; perhaps 'tis well. "Ignorance is bliss"; hence this cheerful mood.

I have worked on eight districts, as follows: Richmond, West Richmond, and Portsmouth and Newport News, one year each, Charlottesville three years, Lynchburg four years, Eastern Shore five years, Norfolk thirteen years, and Rappahannock twenty-two years.

I have served under seventeen Presiding Elders, as follows: Joseph H. Davis, *Leonidas Rosser*, twice; Edward P. Wilson, Wm. A. Crocker, J. P. Garland, F. J. Boggs, W. E. Judkins, *J. C. Reed*, twice; Wm. E. Payne, Wm. P. Wright, J. S. Hunter, *R. T. Wilson*, twice; J. H. Amiss, *W. H. Edwards*, twice; B. F. Lipscomb, Geo. Wesley Jones, and T. McN. Simpson.

My Presiding Elders have always been considerate of me and my needs. The older Elders did not talk over my appointments with me. My needs were so many and varied it would have been a waste of precious time to have talked over each of these; they simply took up the most pressing of these (work) and let the others go. Of late (that is, under the new order) they have asked that perplexing question, "Where do you want to go next year?" I sometimes replied, "The place I want I cannot get; the place I do not want suits my dear Brother Blank, and he deserves the place; send him there." I invariably ended the interview by calling in my wife, who, without any round-about remarks, came to the point direct by saying, "A Methodist



preacher's duty is to go where he is sent." And I have gone only twice to the place where it seems the Lord did not send me, and I moved at the end of the first year.

It is sometimes unfortunate for a preacher's wife to have too high an estimate of her husband's merits. It smacks of self-praise; patting herself on the back for displaying such wisdom in marrying so wonderful a man. There are scores of us who can tell her she could have done much better; and there are instances in our Conference history when the entire body was startled at hearing an appointment read out by a misguided, yet gracious Bishop.

I have received appointments that were entirely too large for me, but I soon reduced them to my size. There are brethren in this Conference who have done the same thing, but have not had the courage to confess it. I have had charges that I considered too small for me, but I built them up, and left them for other men to reduce.

Seriously, brethren, my appointments have always been too big for me as *a mere man*, and many times, with the anguish of a mind and heart overwhelmed with a sense of my insufficiency, I have gone in, and by the grace of God, taken up the work with fear and trembling. The record will show whether I succeeded or failed. Through Infinite Mercy have I been able to accomplish anything.

To me, a young man with little education, and an extraordinary opinion of my wisdom to plan and ability to achieve, the Presiding Elder was a necessity. His teaching was worth a college course of many years. He tried me "as silver is tried." But he did it in love, and I loved those faithful men with a strong, unchanging devotion. They taught me how little I knew. They showed me how to gather material for effective pulpit use, how to use an untrained judgment in a crisis, and a score of other things that tided me over many a shallow place.

But it was Dr. Jas. A. Duncan, brother of the Bishop, and president of Randolph-Macon College, who taught me how to make a sermon. On "how to find a text," he said to the class

one day, "you must get your texts on your knees, out of the Word of God, and out of your own heart. When you get them elsewhere, or by any other method, your sermons will usually be essays, or literary lectures at best."

I speak of him particularly because, next to my mother and grandfather, he had more to do with molding my character and aiding me to prepare for my life-work than any other human being. He entered into the secret purposes and hopes of my soul, and taught me as a father and friend. He understood my weaknesses, and laid his finger on the difficulties which then hindered my growth. I committed myself, without reserve, to his wise and faithful care, and will ever thank God that Dr. Duncan came into my life at the moment when I needed him.

I have some sketches of my Presiding Elders which may interest someone.

REV. JOSEPH H. DAVIS invited me to his home, near the Hague in Westmoreland, some time in September, 1872, when I was on the Montross Circuit. I went with *alacrity* and returned to the court-house loaded down with *information*. His good wife served a bountiful dinner, after which he and I assembled on the front porch, and the assault began. "I understand," said he, "that you have asked a young woman to marry you, and that you will be married before Conference. You did not advise with me about this matter; who is she?" I stammered out the date of the coming event, and told him *it was the custom for the man to ask the woman in such a case*, and then, in much confusion of face, gave him the lady's name. He knew the family well, and was very fond of the girl, and exclaimed, "What! She! Emma! Why, Gregory, I have never given you credit for so much sense! Nevertheless, you have treated your Presiding Elder with great discourtesy; and I charge you never to do that again." I promised him that I would never offend in that fashion again, and later I rode away on "Dexter" brimful of thoughts and a little amusement.

DR. LEONIDAS ROSSER gave me many a profitable hour as we travelled together over the Rappahannock District. His long

itinerant life had furnished him with an inexhaustible store of very interesting material. His cheerfulness was natural, perennial, contagious. His constructive method of teaching the fundamentals of Methodism was very helpful to the young preacher who sat at his side and permitted the trustworthy horse to find his own way. Often he selected a tedious journey as the occasion for a sermon, and preached it as we went." I "hid these things in my heart" and head. Once upon a time, in a hot August period, I travelled all night in my buggy from the King George parsonage to Marvin Grove camp meeting, arriving at the breakfast hour. Hearing that I had come, he came to my tent and informed me that I must preach at 3 o'clock. I protested that I could not, on account of my all-night drive, face a congregation for any profitable results. He replied, "O yes, you can; you know the hour; you can prepare by resting from now till then, six hours." "Well, Doctor," said I, "if you will not release me, I shall be compelled to use one of those sermons you have been giving me in our travels." He replied, "That settles it; but it is a very unwise thing to do," and left me without another word. So, therefore, recalling the story which I had heard when a boy, of one of our preachers who used Bishop Early's sermon in the bishop's presence at a camp meeting, I set my memory to work to reproduce that sermon of his on the text "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." As I faced the congregation he sat on my right, and watched me with ill-concealed astonishment when I announced the text. As I proceeded to develop the thoughts indicated in the analysis, just as he did as we travelled the sandy roads of King and Queen county, his interest, either in the desperate young preacher, or in the familiar method of discussion, quickened, till I could feel the cut of his eagle eye to the very center of my being. At the end of the service, which was, of course, without results, I turned to find him standing just behind me. I extended my hand, and said, "Doctor, I did the best I could." He replied, "Yes, you did well; and used my material. You are the most impudent preacher on my district," and turning,

left me there waist deep in a flood of mixed emotions that almost swept me off my feet.

I drove into my yard at Heathsville on a certain day and found him there, just arrived from somewhere. My buggy was loaded with good things the people had given me. He examined the supplies minutely, and then lifting his hands above his head, cried out, "Aaron with the golden calf!" "And who are you?" said I. "Moses on the mountain with the Lord," said he. "Ah," said I, "Moses fasted forty days; you seem to be hungry, Doctor; share with Aaron and his family these good things the people of God have sent, anticipating your need." He laughed aloud at the simplicity of my answer, and replied, "I will indeed."

The average congregation seldom thought in the rich, logical leads along which he led them; hence in the first few days of his greatest meetings the interest lagged. But after that certain people began to see a master in the pulpit, and the tide began to rise. Crowds filled our largest churches, and in the end, with mighty spiritual power, he swept the best elements in the community into the Church. He was a great preacher because he was a great expounder of the Word of God, and had unlimited faith in the promise of the Spirit to own the Word. He was the Elijah of the Church, the grey eagle of the Conference, at home on the peaks of an exalted Christian experience; never at rest till he had carried his congregation to Pisgah's summit; mighty in prayer and at the altar with a struggling penitent. He was a cultured preacher of great power, whose elegant diction and finished periods cut their way to conviction and confession.

REV. WM. A. CROCKER was an ideal friend and brother, clean, true, a holy man in all manner of conversation, "easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"; a man of prayer, imitating his Lord with child-like faith and beautiful simplicity. He was a fine preacher, a close student, an expositor of no mean ability, as

his little books on "Daniel" and "Revelation" abundantly show. His career as Presiding Elder was brief. He excelled as a pastor, and succeeded in every charge he served. The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned alike claimed him as a friend, and liked to hear him preach because they knew him in the home.

REV. FRANCIS J. BOGGS was among the most lovable men I ever met. He was an artillery officer during the Civil war, and never lost his martial spirit. In the pulpit he was natural, spiritual, earnest. In the chair patient, careful, courteous, firm. In social life an agreeable companion, an entertaining talker, a polite listener, jovial, honest, transparent. As an adviser and friend he was sincere and safe.

REV. J. POWELL GARLAND was closer to me in the bonds of friendship than any Elder I had served under up to that time, 1881-2. He was very cordial. His generous view of men and movements, his strong devotion to the doctrines and discipline of the Church, impressed me greatly. Some, who think they knew him, may not agree with me in this view, but I am giving my estimate of the man after the closest possible intercourse for a number of years. He was with me on occasions when my courage was severely tested, and, by his firm stand, made me brave to do that which I might not have done if I had had a less courageous supporter. The result was, certain troublesome men and women were excluded from the Church, and Methodism and your speaker made stronger in all that region.

I never saw him weaken but once. It was in February, 1881. The Rappahannock was frozen over from Fredericksburg to Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Garland was on his first visit to the churches of the Northern Neck, and his first appointment over there was my First Quarterly Conference on King George circuit. I met him in Port Royal and pushed him across the river in a chair on the ice. I had on my best skates. He presented an absurd picture of fear and melancholy as he took his seat in

the chair with his grip in his lap, and gazed across at the other shore, half a mile away. As he sat waiting for me to tighten my skates for the run, he remarked, in droll but honest conviction, "I may never see my family again, but I am trying to meet my appointments." I could not resist the temptation to be a little merry, and replied, "You will soon be a *sliding Elder* indeed." He noticed the remark, and said, "You don't seem to realize the seriousness of the situation, but some men are made that way."

I first found REV. JOSEPH H. AMISS when he was on the Old Sussex circuit in 1868, and I was station agent at Stoney Creek on the Petersburg and Weldon railroad, and preparing for the ministry under Rev. Jas. A. Riddick. And he found *me* one day during revival services at Bethlehem Church in September of that year, and put me up to preach my first sermon. I cannot say that I succeeded. My lame attempt was permanently crippled by the screams of a baby that had fallen from its sleeping mother's lap. Yet Brother Amiss, persistent, inflexible, with authority, and commendable faith in a hopeful youth, sent me, on three successive Sundays, to six churches: Concord, Lloyd's, Coman's Well, Jones's, Tabernacle, and Oak Grove. In after years he boasted that he gave me my first lessons in itinerant life. Several times we clashed when he was my Elder on the Gloucester circuit from 1899 to 1902, but, on the succeeding round, he would declare that he remembered nothing about it. I got my revenge when I was President of the Norfolk Preachers' Meeting in 1913 and 1914—two years. I held him in the firm grip of perfect confidence, and a sincere reverence for the tried veteran of a long and successful ministry. He honored me by declaring, at the end of my term, "We have had a gentleman in the chair," and the brethren of that strong body conferred on me the title of "Doctor of Divinity," which title I have borne with pride to this day. An admiring friend, who was present but did not understand the drift, wanted to take the resolution to the trustees of Randolph-Macon College for confirmation, but was hindered. The Norfolk Preachers'

Meeting of that day needed the endorsement of no one. *And I still live!*

To the Presiding Elders under whom I have served, and are yet among us, I tender my sincere thanks for all their kindnesses to me and mine. Amid the testing fires of your office, the tedious round of travel on your district, and in the uncurtained arcana of council mysteries tackling the perplexing problems incident to sending the "Innocents Abroad," you have dealt very kindly with me. Sometimes I have been tempted to think you might have given me a better appointment; but you have never failed to give me *work*, and that is the main thing, after all. Your visits to my humble parsonage have been a blessing to my family; an inspiration to me every way. We gave you the best we had—"love without dissimulation." Altogether, you have been very gracious, very secretive, and "a very present help in time of trouble."

Some one will get credit in the records of this Conference for starting the move to get rid of oral examinations. But I am in possession of the *facts* regarding the *occasion* for that revolution. You may award the medal to the *Committee to Examine the Class of the Fourth Year for the Quadrennium 1891-1894*. Berryman, Betty, Tudor and Butts composed the committee, and they were about the last to push undergraduates through the oral mill. We were a blood-thirsty quartette, carving quivering clericals with the knife of literary inquisition without mercy when once we got them securely locked in our dismal den. Ours was no "university" like Brother DeShazo's committee room; 'twas rather a butcher's shop. There came before us during these four years the following *trembling saints* (besides others too numerous to mention) with certificates and diplomas from various schools: J. O. Babcock, Jas. H. Moss. W. A. S. Conrad, Porter Hardy, James Cannon, Jr., Jas. W. Moore, E. V. Carson, John L. Bray, Thos. N. Potts, E. H. Rawlings, W. B. Jett and R. H. Bennett. We laid for Beauchamp; we saw him coming over the hills to the Conference sausage mill, but the Bishop removed us and saved him.

We asked these skilled workmen in the mines of wisdom questions which no other committee would have thought of, and one of these victims, in the midst of the torture, boldly asserted that he "did not know these things were in those books." Of course we were not responsible for that; we were there to *find out what was inside of the men*, and *not to talk of what was in the books*. We had gone down to the very bottom of these subjects from the viewpoint of originality, and, if the writers of these books did not know the things we knew, it was their misfortune, and a great loss to the literary world.

That was the end of oral examinations, and it was the end of the famous career of that committee as well. Our very names should have suggested care, and predicted ruin. *Berryman-Butts* throws a *graveyard* on the screen, and *Betty-Tudor* would have reminded a wide-awake reader of history that *Elizabeth Tudor was the last of her line* on the throne of a more ancient and stable realm.

Several years ago I travelled from Roanoke to Blacksburg. As we neared the Alleghenies the towering hills were awful in tremendous heights, startling and impressive with the multitudinous changes in outline and foliage. When I arrived at Blacksburg the hills could not be seen without a careful search. I asked the pastor of our church there, "Where are the great mountains I saw as I journeyed from Roanoke?" He replied, "You are on top."

There were many big men in our Conference in the seventies; men of great intellectual, social and spiritual force, whose fame extended beyond the limits of our State. It may be indiscreet, if not perilous, to ask "Why have we not as big men in these days of opportunity for culture?" The answer might be, "We, who are not great, are so near the top we have lost our point of view!" I would not press this matter, brethren, except to say, the fathers were great because they were men of faith; and there are men among us today with as great faith, but they are men far out on the firing-line, some of them obscure men, men



of small pretensions, mighty in deeds and in prayer; men known not by the appointments they get, but by the things they bring to pass; men of simple speech but strong personality; men who reach the plain cabin home and bring to Christ an uncultured throng that sleeps when the giraffe stands in the pulpit; men who are today making strong the outworks of Zion, while men of great ability for organization and faith are directing the movements of the Church from the center. It is a very easy thing for an ungracious spirit to find fault with the men higher up; and easier still to forget the men lower down. The sin of the inefficient ministry may be jealousy, and of some higher up it may be "thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; let each of us think of himself according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." We are each one necessary to the other's efficiency. Foch, Bing, Petain, Pershing could have done little without the men on the firing-line. It is just as unwise to ask "Why there are so few great men among us today?" "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give" the life he has, with its consecrated and blood-washed faculties, to the service of a world crying aloud for light and hope, and a watchful Heavenly Father, "rich unto all that call upon Him," will reward both small and great.

Let me mention a few names of the old guard: *W. W. Bennett*, for years a circuit preacher, then editor of the *Richmond Christian Advocate* and later president of Randolph-Macon College. He was the father of our Richard H. Bennett, superintendent of the Department of Ministerial Supply and Training in Our Church; of William Wallace Bennett, M. D., a practicing physician at Blackstone; Edward Sangster Bennett, assistant secretary and treasurer Blackstone College for Girls; Mrs. Lura Bennett Cannon, wife of Bishop James Cannon, Jr., Birmingham, Ala.; Miss Nellie Bennett, missionary to Japan, principal Frazier Institute, Hiroshima, Japan; and of Miss Mary Lee Bennett, teacher in Blackstone College for Girls and superintendent Mission Study and Publicity Woman's Missionary Society, Virginia Conference, Blackstone, Va.

Has any couple since the days of Susanna Wesley (unless it be the Pierces and the Ellises of Georgia) left a better example of the worth of home religion than this itinerant and his wife?

JOHN DAVENPORT BLACKWELL, the father of our Dr. R. E. Blackwell, of Randolph-Macon College. He was the urbane and cultured gentleman, learned and devout, gracious and invincible in debate, a splendid preacher who did not "handle the Word of God deceitfully." He used but two weapons: the strong blade of logic, ground to a keen edge on the impregnable rock of truth, and a terrible courtesy that spared no antagonist till he brought him to the ground in the shame of conscious defeat. Some one has said that Dr. Blackwell could decapitate an opponent in debate with such suavity of manner, as if trying to atone for the tragic event, that the unlucky contender would pick up his head and bow himself gracefully from the arena, thankful that his linen had not been soiled by the Christian victor. Dr. Blackwell was too large a man to resort to personalities. He was too humble a man to appropriate to himself the glory that belongs to the Truth!

JAMES A. DUNCAN (of whom I have already spoken), the successful pastor, the great college president, the wonderful preacher, who, with skillful analysis, faultless rhetoric, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," led men, young and old, to a higher life.

JOHN ELLIS EDWARDS, the platform summer breeze, the great word-painter, the tireless pastor, the friend of the children and of the old folks, everybody's counselor and sympathizer. He was my mother's pastor at Washington Street Church, Petersburg, and again at Market Street, of which he was the founder. I loved him as a boy loves the pastor who comes to his home as one of the family, and charms the family with yarns and laughter—the preacher who has left his stilts outside, and can keep folks awake Sundays in church with his fascinating pictures and thrilling incidents. He was the grandfather of Mr. Leroy S. Edwards, of Newport News.

After him came ROBERT NEWTON SLEDD to Market Street Church, gentle, modest, grave, intensely in earnest in the pulpit, not always eloquent, but holding attention and arousing in his hearers a sympathetic emotion like unto that which blazed in his fervid paragraphs and flashed in his brilliant eyes, as he caught the spirit of his theme. His daily converse with men gave him the right-of-way to thousands of hearts, and won multitudes to Christ. Under his ministry I publicly confessed Christ and joined Market Street Church in October, 1862. He was the father of Dr. Andrew Sledd.

JOHN C. GRANBERY (afterwards Bishop), a quiet, devout, faithful man; one of the best expounders of the Word in the whole Southern Church; a professor in Vanderbilt University; merit of a high order carried him easily to the highest office in the gift of his Church. It was he who placed the first books in my hands when I began preparation for the ministry.

LEROY M. LEE, the logical preacher, the sharp satirist, pitiless with irony and invective, and withal a gentleman of the old school, who despised littleness, and assailed it with all the might of his inexhaustible fund of ridicule. His talent as a humorist was acknowledged and enjoyed by many, and feared by the unfortunate person who happened to be caught by one of the Doctor's jokes. He was the grandfather of our L. L. Banks.

PETER A. PETERSON was another leader of that day. He was not only assistant secretary for many years, but he was the leader of song. With a mellow voice, of far reaching power and perfect harmony, he led our largest Conference congregations with ease, and to the delight and edification of all. He was wise in counsel, patient under the most trying conditions, and a devout man. He was the grandfather of our Wm. Archer Wright.

EDWARD MARSHALL PETERSON, his brother, was an authority on Conference relations, baptism and hypocrisy. He was a terror to the Ritualist, especially to that particular specimen who unwisely remarked to Brother Peterson one fateful day that he

(the Ritualist) could not exchange pulpits with him (Peterson) "because the canon of the church forbade it." Peterson replied, "I can spike that little canon with a three-penny nail!" He was a source of perplexity and confusion to our deep-water brethren, as many in Tidewater Virginia and elsewhere can testify. And hypocrisy sought a hiding place, side by side with the proselyter, in the tall timbers when it was "norated around" that old man Peterson with his long linen duster was coming.

PAUL WHITEHEAD and ALEXANDER G. BROWN, linked together in the work of our Conference sessions for years, both model Presiding Elders, foundation constructors in the larger part of our territory, trusted leaders among preachers and laymen. DR. WHITEHEAD was forty-seven years secretary of this Conference, after having served several years as the assistant. He was an ecclesiastical lawyer and parliamentarian, censor of "Bishops and other clergy," a lover of nature, of rambles among the fields, and of preachers. "His marvellous and reliable memory, his quick perception, his ability to speak clearly and briefly, gave him prominence on the floor of our Conference and of the General Conference." He was a Presiding Elder twenty-five years. DR. BROWN was a strong debater, a powerful advocate, an antagonist not to be underrated. "His valuable services as chairman of the Executive Committee and of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees of Randolph-Macon College" is placed on record by Dr. Whitehead, who wrote his Memoir in 1900. He held fast the fundamentals of doctrinal and experimental religion. He was not a great preacher, but was a monumental success in every post assigned him. He preceded Dr. Whitehead by seven years, through death unto life eternal. Bishop Granbery and Dr. Whitehead died the same year, 1907.

There were others: George W Nolley, Wm. B. Rowzie, Henry B. Cowles, Lemuel S. Reed, George W Langhorne, and Edward P Wilson. There were younger men of commanding ability, just coming into public notice, who in a few years became as popular among our best churches: Wm. G. Starr, Wm. E.

Edwards, S. S. Lambeth, Adam C. Bledsoe, and Wm. E. Judkins. Bledsoe was our Conference Asaph, who charmed multitudes with the richness and melody of a cultivated voice.

And JOHN J. LAFFERTY! This name carries me back to the days of my childhood in Petersburg. Dr. Lafferty studied medicine in the office of my uncle, Dr. John Herbert Claiborne, in that city, and was frequently in the home of my parents on Lawrence street. He took delight in the little boy who hung on his knee and asked questions. He taught me how to lay a toy railway track in our back yard. He took me to Dan Rice's circus, to the swimming hole in the Appomattox in summer, and to Hannon's skating pond in winter, over the protest of my mother. He professed conversion in the great revival in Washington Street Church in '57 or '58, and from a bitter skeptic became a zealous Christian, and later abandoned the practice of medicine for the sacred calling of the ministry. Except when he came to my work in after years in behalf of the *Advocate* (of which he became the editor) I never came in contact with him till November, 1895, when I was sent to the Albemarle circuit. The greeting he gave me in his home, and the introduction to the congregation at Crozet, his home church, were characteristic. One, not knowing me, would have thought the orator of the Conference, the leading theologian of the Church, South, the one man in the whole State on whom the trustees of Randolph-Macon College had failed to confer an honorary title (I had often thought the same myself), sat in the pulpit to prove, by a marvellously eloquent sermon, all that the speaker said, or could say. It was Dr. Lafferty speaking, my childhood's companion and friend, and certainly no man had a better right than he to say what he pleased. His love for the little boy of Lawrence street, Petersburg, was his best apology, now that the boy had become the pastor of his family. In his home for three years I found a cordial welcome, generous hospitality, books, manuscripts, fellowship. His "Farewell to a Choice Pastor," published as an editorial in the *Advocate* at the time of my departure, was a valued tribute to my labors on the charge, a

benediction I shall carry on my heart to the end of my life. When he passed away a few years later, I lamented his going with a sincere grief, and the shadow fell upon my home as it did upon his. Of his literary equipment and masterful writings I have no power to speak, and few have. Such a mind and such writings can engage no sympathetic criticism from any but the brain that travels easily along the highways of thought where the Greek and the Latin masters found themselves at home.

Alas! departed friend of my earliest pleasures, and of my latest labors, none seemed to see the glory of the sunset but the little boy you loved so well, and *he* did not, and does not yet, understand the meaning of the cloud.

Brothers Rowzie, Reed, Michaels, Cowles, with the circuit preachers, were periodic visitors at "Roslin," Brunswick county, my birthplace, the home of my maternal grandfather, Rev. John Gregory Claiborne, a local preacher on the old Brunswick circuit for sixty-two years. It was from these godly men that I caught the spirit of the Methodist itinerancy. Life on the farm, the rapid growth of the churches, the sound Christian experience of hundreds of church members, testify to the strong influence of these holy men on the individual life of the people, and the regulative power of Methodism on the public mind, if not the heart, of all that region.

I was granted a license to preach by the Quarterly Conference of the Hanover circuit at North Run Church, Henrico county, Va., March 6, 1869, and the paper is signed by Jacob Manning, Presiding Elder. Dr. John Hannon had the good fortune to be with me that day, and to obtain his license from the same body at the same time. Perhaps this will account, in part, for the good Doctor's most remarkable career. We were students at Randolph-Macon, and during the sessions of '69 and '70 "practiced" on the patient people in the surrounding country, as well as at "Oregon Hill" (now Laurel street), "Sidney" (now Park Place), and "Rocketts" (now Denny Street), in the City of Richmond. It was here that I met Mr. Asa Snyder, of Centenary, and Mr. Peter J. Crew, of Trinity. They enter-

tained the young preacher at their homes, and gave good advice and prayer in the hour of need. They were men of sterling piety, great faith, and strong influence, whose life and leadership did the cause of Methodism good in the chief city of the State.

In the summer of '69 I was employed by the Presiding Elder of the Richmond District as Junior, under Rev. E. M. Peterson, on the old Gloucester circuit, which covered the whole of Gloucester county. Brother Peterson's patience, his courage, his wise counsel, his godly life, his kindly care for all that concerned my improvement in knowledge, and my growth in grace, had much to do with my work in after years. He was a most valuable teacher.

When college opened in the fall of '69, I returned to Ashland and completed my second year under the supervision of Dr. Duncan. The death of my father, in August, 1870, and the consequent breaking up of my home in Petersburg, led me to decide to return to my room at college and begin my third year, not knowing what would befall me. A singular Providence opened the way, and I have never doubted that it was an answer to prayer. Rev. Geo. W. Nolley, the preacher in charge of Caroline circuit, was made agent of Randolph-Macon College, and secured the services of P. C. Archer, a student at college, to take charge of the circuit. Brother Archer, with the consent of the Presiding Elder, Rev. Joseph H. Davis, urged me to accept the place of assistant on the charge till Conference, with the assurance that Bishop Pierce would appoint us as "supply," the charge paying us enough to keep us both at the college till the end of the session in June, 1871. I accepted, believing that the Hand of God was leading.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference, held at "Hopewell" Church, Guinea's station on the R., F. & P. R. R., Brother Davis informed us that the Bishop had written that one of us must join Conference at the session in November. The lot fell to me. I passed the examination for the recommendation, but as my membership was with the Hanover Quarterly Confer-

ence, I went there in a few days, and passed that examination likewise, was duly recommended by that body, and went up to the Annual Conference in November with my papers in legal form.

I was received on trial by the Virginia Conference in old Court Street Church, Lynchburg, Friday, November 11, 1870. Bishop Geo. F. Pierce, presiding. Joshua S. Hunter, of the Appomattox circuit, Jas. T. Lumpkin, of the Nottoway circuit, and Geo. W. Matthews, of the Smithfield circuit, were the other members of the class. Brother Matthews was later in the session transferred to Arkansas. He and Brother Lumpkin have gone to their reward, having faithfully served the Church for years. Brother Hunter and I alone remain.

More than thirty-five hundred souls have been added to the Church under my ministry. A small number for so long a period of service? Yes, but the Lord did the best He could with the instrument He had; and the amazing thought with me is that He accomplished as much as He did. Over and beyond it all, brethren, God laid upon me a great commission, and, by His almighty help, I succeeded. He gave me the privilege of helping Him answer my mother's prayers which lay there on the Mercy Seat six years after her translation. By His grace I led my father to Christ in his sixty-second year as the first fruits of my ministry. Has Heaven ever given a son higher honor than this?

Of the one hundred and sixty-five members of Conference living November 11, 1870, only the following remain: Wm. E. Judkins, John P. Woodward, James O. Moss, Samuel S. Lambeth, James E. McSparren, Charles E. Watts, James C. Reed, J. Wiley Bledsoe, Richard Ferguson, Joshua S. Hunter, and Daniel G. C. Butts—eleven.

This Conference was remarkable for many things which should not be forgotten, but must be passed by at this time.

Two great sermons were delivered by the two greatest pulpit orators in the South at that time—Bishop Geo. F. Pierce, the president of the Conference, and Rev James A. Duncan, presi-



dent of Randolph-Macon College. The memory of these sermons, which held, as with a hand from Heaven, the two large congregations for more than an hour each, still lingers. Bishop Pierce was at the height of his fame as a preacher, and Dr. Duncan, already the peer of any living man in the use of sacred eloquence, came from the bedside of a dying wife. He seemed specially endued with power by the fires of tribulation to be the prophet of a triumphant gospel. The method these messengers employed in presenting the truth was different, yet so much alike in "the demonstration of power," so significant of a purpose to magnify the Cross; so effective in reaching the conscience of men; so lacking in the effort to display literary culture, and yet possessing it in a high degree; so filled with the spirit of glorying in the vision of the triumphant Christ; and so fired with the passionate challenge that the ministry magnify its calling, that the great congregations were lifted on the wing of exultant song, while hundreds were subdued in penitential tears and prayer. Nothing could compare with the effect produced by these two great sermons, unless we except that of Bishop Marvin at Elizabeth City, N. C., four years later.

At this Conference of 1870 Dr. Paul Whitehead, president of the "Society for the Relief of the Preachers of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Their Families, Their Widows, and Orphans," reported to the Conference the organization of the society under a charter obtained from the Legislature of North Carolina, and asked the ratification by the Conference of the same. This was done on the following Thursday, the 17th, and the following directors were elected: Paul Whitehead, J. J. Yeates, John R. Kilby, Geo. M. Bain, Jr., J. H. Dawson, Richard Irby, D'Arcy Paul, Alex. G. Brown, and Thomas Whitehead.

Another event which transpired at this Conference makes it historic, namely, the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Several useful ministers and valuable laymen, and a score or more of churches were enrolled with our membership.

Among the ministers I mention Rev. Wm. A. Crocker, father of our very useful brother, Frank L. Crocker, at Monumental, Portsmouth, Rev. F. A. Davis, Rev. T. C. Jennings, Rev. John McClelland, and Rev. Wm. McGee. At the Conference of 1871 three more ministers came into our Conference and were enrolled: Rev. W. W. Walker, father of our State senator, Harding Walker, Rev. Starke Jett, grandfather of Rev. Starke Jett, one of our promising young men, and Rev. Wm. T. White.

Another important incident should be noted: a committee consisting of Rev. Dr. Leroy M. Lee, Rev. Dr. (afterward Bishop) John C. Granbery, and D'Arcy Paul, was appointed, and reported a paper expressing "the sentiments of the Conference in view of the sad event," the death of Rev. Wm. A. Smith, D. D., of the St. Louis Conference, "who for forty-one years was a prominent and beloved member of this body, and whose distinguished services, no less than his exalted religious and ministerial character, entitle his memory to perpetual regard in the Church."

The paper was read by Dr. Granbery on the evening of the eighth day of the session. "Dr. Smith was born in Fredericksburg, Va., in 1802, and died in Richmond in March, 1870. He was one of the great men of Southern Methodism, a leader in our Conference, and on the floor of the General Conference from 1832 to 1844. He was a great debater. In the great polemic battle in the General Conference of 1844, which resulted in the division of the church, he won a reputation wide as the United States, and inferior to that of no minister in any denomination, for the highest deliberative and forensic eloquence. He was a member of the Louisville Convention in 1845, which organized the M. E. Church, South, and of all the General Conferences of this Church to the day of his death. He commanded universal respect and confidence among his brethren by the sincerity of his zeal, and the power of his reasoning." He was president of Randolph-Macon College for twenty years.

The above is a paragraph taken bodily out of the report of that committee. I dare not substitute my lame language for the

pure English of those three men who represented the piety and the wisdom of the Church. The body of Dr. Smith rests in beautiful Hollywood, Richmond. Over the grave is a monument erected by order of the Conference and the donations of those who loved him.

My first appointment was Caroline circuit, with P. C. Archer, as "one to be supplied," for my junior, the arrangement having been made that we should be sent there in that order, and attend college to the end of that session, June, 1871. Our salary was \$250 each, and with this we paid our expenses; a remarkable instance of Providence coming to my aid in solving the problem of how to remain at school the third year. Here on this charge at Rehoboth Church I met the lady who later became my wife, the daughter of Dr. Geo. F. Swann, the leading steward of that church. The circuit had seven appointments, and extended from Doswell to Summit on the railroad, and from Spottsylvania to King William. Geo. M. Wright was my neighbor on the east, and John Q. Rhodes on the west.

A most confusing situation was precipitated at the Third Quarterly Conference on the Spottsylvania circuit that year by the extreme courtesy of two unsophisticated young preachers. Bro. Jos. H. Davis, the Presiding Elder, was sick somewhere up in Culpeper, and sent Bro. Jas. F. Twitty, spending the summer at Culpeper, to this quarterly Conference to do the preaching. I went up as a visitor, glad to meet Twitty, my college mate, and welcome him to the field. When the time came, after a bountiful dinner, to hold the quarterly Conference, Brother Rhodes insisted that courtesy "compelled him to invite Brother Twitty, his guest, to preside," and I agreed that "it was the proper thing to do." After some persuasion (necessary in handling a modest man like Twitty) Twitty consented, and presided. J. P. H. Crismond was examined by all three of us, passed, and was licensed to preach. Then we separated, mutually agreeing that it was a most delightful occasion. When the Fourth Quarterly Conference came, the deluge came also. Brother Davis pronounced the whole thing illegal; Crismond

had to go through the mill the second time, and the records were declared null, so far as a third quarterly Conference was concerned. Brother Rhodes got a dose of law on the half-shell that day. Twitty had already gotten his dose when he reported to Brother Davis what had happened. As for me, I was far away from the scene of the disaster, visiting Dr. Swann's daughter in Caroline.

From the Portsmouth Conference, 1871 (held by the courtesy of that congregation in the Court Street Baptist Church, because the old Dinwiddie Street Church could not accommodate the large attendance), I was sent to the Montross circuit, with headquarters at Westmoreland court-house, or, more correctly stated, *in the saddle*. I crossed the Rappahannock at Port Royal. When I entered the ferryboat with my horse "Dexter," the negro ferryman asked my destination. I replied, "Westmoreland court-house." Then he wanted to know my business, and I informed him. "I am a preacher of the gospel." He looked up the river, grunted, and exclaimed, "You looks like it." I sat the remainder of the tedious journey across, holding "Dexter's" bridle rein, and wrapt in the magnificent folds of my own cloudy meditations, revolving those mighty conceptualities, which, in a priori principles, constitute the fundamental conditions on which my youthful brain might discover its normal inferiority so strongly suggested by the dusky American citizen of African ancestry. That night I spent in the home of Bro. J. W. Stiff, who was quite a large boy, even then. I went the next day from this Christian home out among strangers with the blessing of his godly father cheering my heart. I arrived at Montross at noon, Friday, December 15, 1871, closely followed by a driving snowstorm. At the clerk's office I found Mr. J. Warren Hutt, the county clerk and Methodist steward, to whom I introduced myself as the new pastor of the charge. He received me cordially, and remained my warm friend to the end of his life.

There were six legal giants in that clerk's office that dismal Friday. I was presented to each one as "the new preacher in

charge of the three Methodist churches in that section.” As Mr. Hutt and I left the room on his invitation to dinner, I heard one of those big men, through the door that was left ajar, utter words which nearly broke my heart, but which proved, after all, the compelling force that led me to put into my work the best that was in me, and taught me also that I was up against a proposition that would tax the courage of an older man. This is what I heard the big man say: “Why did old Brother Davis let them send that boy to such a place as this! He had better be at school!” The words, spoken out of the kindly feelings of a warm heart, sent me to my knees, to my books, to my daily round of pastoral duties with a fixed purpose to make the best use of the “horseback university.” God became “my refuge and strength” in a newer sense than ever before. The year was not without profit to me and to the church. My salary was \$125; fifty people were added to the church in a great meeting at Andrew Chapel, among them some of the best citizens of the community, not the least among the number I count my dearly-beloved brother, Rev R. M. Chandler, an honored member of this Conference: and the first Providence Church, begun before the Civil war, was completed.

In addition to these mercies God sent me a good wife, who, guided by grace Divine, became the builder of my home, the inspiration and strength of my ministry, my companion and adviser for forty-eight years. She has captured the hearts of the people wherever I have been, from the mountains to the sea, and, oftener than otherwise, has been their reason for requesting my return. Hence, you will not be surprised to learn that I have served the full term of four years on nine charges, and three years each on two others. The remaining eight years were spent on six charges.

During all these fifty years I have answered every roll call on the first day of Conference. I have attended every District Conference, from Culpeper, August 20, 1871, to Courtland, June 15, 1920. I have missed three Quarterly Conferences—

two on account of sickness and one with Dr. Reed's permission, helping Dr. Royall at a missionary rally in Bedford.

I was ordained a deacon by Bishop Paine, in Washington Street Church, Petersburg, November 24, 1872, and returned to the Montross circuit. At the Conference of 1873, held in Cumberland Street, Norfolk, I was appointed to the Heathsville circuit, which then comprised all the churches from Henderson's to Bethany. I was ordained Elder at Elizabeth City, N. C., November 22, 1874, by Bishop E. M. Marvin, and returned to the Heathsville circuit, with Rev. E. P. Wilson, Presiding Elder. In February, 1875, he and I came very near freezing to death in a snowstorm on a bitter cold Sunday afternoon, travelling from Heathsville to Bro. Richard Lyell's, at the village of Farnham Church in Richmond county. Both of us went to sleep in my rockaway thoroughly benumbed with cold. The faithful horse, "Dexter," carried us to our destination, and by pawing against the fence at the side gate close by an outbuilding, where two negro men were sleeping, soon aroused the whole population. Brother Lyell came out to investigate the unusual noise in his back yard, and quickly had us carried into the house to a warm fire, where his practical daughters put in some successful rescue work.

During my term at Heathsville the second "Bethany" Church was built, and the present *parsonage property* bought and paid for under the lead of some of the wisest laymen in Methodism. Littleton Cockrell (the father-in-law of Dr. W. H. Edwards), Dr. J. W. Tankard, Jesse Crowder, John B. Edwards, Rev. Starke Jett (grandfather of our Starke Jett), Rev. A. F. Rice (father of our A. S. J. Rice), A. J. Brent (father of Professor Brent, divisional superintendent of schools in Hampton), Wm. H. French, Jas. Wright, and a score of others, were the consecrated men who created and fostered church work in all that charge. It was on this circuit that I found J. R. Sturgis sailing a vessel out of the Potomac river, and upon the tumbling seas of the Chesapeake, and brought him into the ranks of the "fishers of men."

Hopewell Church, which stands at the junction of Richmond, Lancaster and Heathsville circuits, was built during that period under the direction of a joint committee from the above charges and Westmoreland, consisting of Rev. W. A. Crocker (chairman), Rev. Alfred Wiles, Judge Samuel Downing, Bro. Richard Lyell, Bro. A. J. Brent, and myself.

All this territory, divided by the Rappahannock river, was called "Fredericksburg District" till 1866, then "Rappahannock District" till 1871, when the name was changed to "Randolph-Macon," and was known by that title till 1890. In the midst of this period, that is, from November, 1876, to November, 1878, the Northern Neck was formed into a separate district, with Bro. W. A. Crocker as Presiding Elder. Somebody (it would be unwise to inquire who), at the Conference of 1890, suggested that the whole territory on both sides of the Rappahannock river be named the "Northern Neck District"; but an error that contradicted the physical geography of the State could not stand, so at the Conference of 1891 it went back to its ancient title of "Rappahannock," and so remains today.

The Conference of 1874, at Elizabeth City, N. C., is memorable for the great sermon delivered by Bishop Marvin on "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." (Romans III. 31.) The sermon was delivered at the 11 A. M. hour on Sunday. The multitude fell under the power of sacred eloquence as I had never seen it before. Sinners came up the aisles and fell prostrate before the uplifted Christ, and a triumphant Church rejoiced in the victory of the day. It was a great moment in my life, never to be forgotten, when that flaming apostle, annointed afresh by the Holy Ghost, laid his hands on my unworthy head, giving me "authority to preach the word and administer the holy sacraments in the congregation."

From the Conference of 1877 I went to the King George circuit. There I found J. W. Stiff, R. O. Payne, and John T. Payne, and contributed somewhat to their advancement and admission into this Conference. "Grace" Church on that charge was erected during my term in 1880.

Bethany Church, in the Heathsville circuit, was made a station in November, 1879, and Rev. Dr. W. H. Edwards was its first pastor, followed by such men as J. T. Mastin, R. M. Chandler and others among the strong young men of that day.

November, 1881, I became the successor of Rev. M. S. Colonna (the father of our Dr. Colonna) on the Middlesex circuit, which included in its territory southeastern Essex and King and Queen, northeastern Gloucester and the whole county of Middlesex. The circuit was divided at the 1883 Conference, the East King and Queen circuit was organized, and Rev. E. E. Harrell placed in charge. I remained pastor of the northeast side of the Dragon Swamp till November, 1885, and superintended the erection of "Bethel," at Jamaica, and "Centenary," at Saluda.

Before leaving this period I wish to add this record. Marvin Grove Camp Ground was secured, and the first meeting held August 2-11, 1878, by the co-operation of the laymen of the *four* counties of the Northern Neck of Virginia, namely, Richmond, Westmoreland, Lancaster, and Northumberland. The first Board of Managers, as I recall them, was composed of those sturdy Christian men, whose good name was rife on all tongues in that region: Littleton Cockrell, Samuel Downing, Edwin Broun, Richard Lyell, and James Walker. Dr. Leonidas Rosser was Presiding Elder and *ex-officio* in charge of the religious forces of the meeting. Bishop David S. Doggett was the leading preacher, and delivered several of his great sermons. The fame of the man, who was born in Lancaster county not far from this hallowed spot, had gone before him, and "multitudes came from all the region round about" to hear the great preacher. All they had ever heard of him was fully confirmed, and the provincial pride of the old county was wonderfully stimulated. A Methodist Bishop of such dignity, such magnetic rhetorical ability, swaying crowds of simple country folks, as well as high church aristocrats who did not comprehend the great spiritual power of the man, going out from the very shades of old "King Carter's" Colonial church on historic



Corotoman river, where the big people of the James, the York, and the Potomac came in olden times to do their courting, was a severe shock to the ecclesiastical sensibilities of certain religionists in those parts. But when they were reminded that Enoch George, another Bishop of the Methodist Church, was another contribution from the same section sixty years earlier, amazement took the form of consternation, and presently settled down into silent protest.

Out of this section of Virginia, which has given so many great men to the nation, have come into our Conference William E. Payne, John T. Payne, Wilbur F. Davis, and H. P. Balderson, who have entered into rest, and Richard M. Chandler, Wm. B. Jett, Richard O. Payne, A. S. J. Rice, J. Willard Stiff, Joseph R. Sturgis, Starke Jett, George T. Forrester, and W. B. Beauchamp, who are yet alive and "serving their generation by the will of God."

At the Conference held in Lynchburg, November, 1884, only one death among the ministers was reported, that of Rev. Geo. W. Nolley, who joined the Conference in 1825, and helped materially in laying the foundation of Methodism in the State. A remarkable coincidence occurred at this session. Bishops Geo. F. Pierce and H. H. Kavanaugh had presided jointly at the session of 1883 at Richmond. At this session the death of both these "Princes in Israel" was reported, and a memorable memorial service was held. Dr. W. W. Bennett read the memoir of Brother Nolley, Dr. Paul Whitehead that of Bishop Pierce, and Dr. A. G. Brown that of Bishop Kavanaugh.

In the fall of 1885 I succeeded Rev. J. D. Hank on the Princess Anne circuit. It was a very hard field, extending from the mouth of Lynnhaven river to Currituck Inlet in North Carolina, fifty-two miles down the coast, with *eleven* appointments. Bro. Saml. McKenny, a local preacher, relieved me of three, and I served the rest. We had 1,050 members. There was a great season of revival that year, and more than two hundred souls were added to the church in one of the meetings held. Besides this, the financial growth of the church reached \$600.

It was on this charge that I had my second real fight with the liquor powers, who were backed up by Norfolk city liquor dealers. Because I went to the negro churches and school houses and tried to show the colored people which side was the Lord's side the Liquorites sent a petition to Bishop Granbery at the Norfolk Conference of 1886, begging him "in the name of the wives and the decent white girls of Princess Anne, to send them a white preacher." The Bishop sent me back with the original petition in my pocket. Then the Liquorites said "that Bishop does not know white when he sees it."

At the conference of 1887, held at Danville, the South Princess Anne circuit was formed of the six churches on that end of the work, and I was sent to Wright Memorial, Portsmouth, to succeed Rev. W. H. Atwill. During my stay there the debt on the church, which had been largely reduced during Brother Atwill's term, was fully paid, and a comfortable parsonage bought, and a fund laid up in bank for the present Sunday school building. Mathews was my next appointment, from 1890 to 1894, with W. E. Payne Presiding Elder. Here I served four happy years, erected "St. Paul's," enlarged and improved "Salem" and "Bethel," and went to Accomac, a circuit in triangular shape, composed of Temperanceville, Sanford, and Guilford. The parsonage at Bloxom was built, a lot for the present church secured, the circuit was divided by the natural boundary, the railroad, and I slipped off at the end of one year to Albemarle, the land of fruit, fine water, big dinners, good people and small congregations. After three years on this mountain work, serving some of the kindest people in the State, I was returned to Tidewater, and stationed on blessed old Gloucester circuit, among old friends, many of whom received me into their homes twenty-nine years before when I was junior on the charge under Bro. E. M. Peterson. The church buildings at "Salem" and "Bellamy's" were improved during my term of four years, and about two hundred added to the church.

After four delightful years in Lynchburg, as pastor of the old Centenary Church, organized under the pastorate of Stith

Mead, in 1806, an appointment which challenged the best that was in me, and where I formed friendships as lasting as life-eternal, both in and out of the church, and was brought in contact with one of the cleanest and bravest official boards in the Conference, I was sent to Laurel Street, Richmond, and, after one year, to Franktown and Johnson's on the Eastern Shore. I was detained at Richmond only long enough for Bro. Charles E. Watts to fill out his quadrennium at Franktown and Johnson's, hence my removal to the Eastern Shore was expeditious and without excitement. The parsonage at Franktown was destroyed by fire on the 26th of December, 1909, and a new and modern preacher's home built in its place, with a flight of stairs easy for ascent, and not threatening the life of a baby in the arms of its mother coming down. The old "Johnson's" church was renovated throughout and a lot secured and a Sunday school building erected at Nassawadox. At the memorable Conference held at Salisbury, November, 1911, I was sent to North Princess Anne. On this charge, where I did some of the best work of my life, I came in contact with "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and as true a band of the servants of God as any preacher ever served.

At Oceana a new comfortable parsonage, commenced under the administration of my predecessor, Bro. J. R. Laughton, was in course of erection on my arrival December 1st, and was not ready for my family till February 15th. During my term of four years the church property at Cape Henry, where "Fort Story" now stands, was sold to the Government, and the money invested in the church at Virginia Beach and the parsonage at Oceana. A six-thousand-dollar church was erected at the Beach, and I left it unencumbered with debt, and with a good working membership of sixty-five.

From that delightful charge I went to that brave and faithful and progressive church, Central, Hampton, December 2, 1915. From a weak station it has grown to be a vigorous, aggressive congregation of consecrated men and women, who ask nothing but to be shown their task that they may perform it.

They stood by this preacher and his family in the darkest hour that ever overshadowed our lives—when our first-born son lay dead in France wrapped in the folds of the American flag.

From Central I was sent last fall, 1919, to do pioneer work at Hilton Village. From the very first, under the impetus given in a revival service conducted by Rev. G. T. Forrester, camp pastor, and Rev. W. L. Murphy, then serving Chestnut Avenue, Newport News, the work showed signs of strength in the near future. From all parts of the United States, from New York to Texas, the members have assembled, and at this Conference I reported 175 members of the church, 310 total Sunday school enrollment, and 63 in the Epworth League. A church building has been erected at a cost of \$25,000, and will be dedicated next Sunday, November 14th, by Dr. W. H. Edwards, our retiring Presiding Elder.

In order that you may get some idea of the growth of the Church in our Conference in fifty years I shall use some statistics; and that I may be perfectly fair I shall use the Danville and the Charlottesville districts (up-country territory) and the Norfolk District (tidewater).

*The Danville District* reported in 1870 eleven charges, four parsonages, 3,217 members in 63 organized churches; 2,238 scholars in 52 Sunday schools. Raised for Foreign Missions \$60.38, for Domestic Missions \$139.40, for Conference Collection \$174.38, for Randolph-Macon College \$12.01.

At the Conference of 1918 (the last session at which the amount raised each cause was reported separately) that district reported 26 charges, 21 parsonages, 11,051 members in 95 organized churches, 8,682 scholars in 87 Sunday schools. Raised for Foreign Missions \$4,724, for Domestic Missions \$9,556, for Conference Collection \$2,404, for Randolph-Macon College \$916.

*The Charlottesville District* in 1870 reported 13 charges, 5 parsonages, 4,004 members in 66 organized churches, 2,447 scholars in 56 Sunday schools. Raised for Foreign Missions \$110.87, for Domestic Missions \$180.57, for Conference Collection \$284.49, for Randolph-Macon College \$92.05.

At the Conference of 1918, in practically the same territory, the district reported 27 charges, 27 parsonages, 17,465 members in 131 organized churches, 10,277 scholars in 129 Sunday schools. Raised for Foreign Missions \$2,567, for Domestic Missions \$4,042, for Conference Collection \$2,123, for Randolph-Macon College \$759.

*The Norfolk District* reported in 1870 16 charges, located as follows: 2 in Norfolk, 3 in Portsmouth, 3 circuits outside of the town, 4 on the Eastern Shore in Maryland, 3 in Accomac and Northampton, and 1 in Hampton and York, combined. There were 3 parsonages, that is, 1 in Princess Anne county, 1 at Downings in Accomac, and 1 in Dorchester, Maryland.

There were 5,193 members in 67 churches and 6,819 scholars in 67 Sunday schools. These charges raised for Foreign Missions that year \$142.39, for Domestic Missions \$384.58, and for Randolph-Macon College \$197.91.

At the Conference of 1918, this same territory, covered by the Norfolk, the Eastern Shore, and a part of the Portsmouth District, reported 61 charges, 56 parsonages, 26,386 members in 124 organized churches, 23,675 scholars in 129 schools. Raised for Foreign Missions \$5,900, for Domestic Missions \$8,213, for Conference Collection \$7,730, for Randolph-Macon College \$3,033 on assessment.

At the Conference of 1870, there were (exclusive of the territory in North Carolina) 114 charges, 38 parsonages, 36,245 members in 533 organized churches, 26,264 scholars in 492 Sunday schools. The Conference raised for Foreign Missions \$936.59, for Domestic Missions \$2,256.25, for Conference Collection \$3,565.31, for Randolph-Macon College \$1,045.21.

The total raised by the Conference for all purposes in 1870 was \$98,800. Average per member, \$2.72 plus.

The total raised for all purposes in 1918 was \$1,400,350. The membership was 131,064. Average per member, \$10.68.

If you will compare the \$78,000 raised in 1870 for ministerial support with the \$352,000 raised in 1918 for the same cause, you will see that the increase is *five-fold*. But if you will com-

pare the \$20,000 raised for *all other* purposes in 1870 with the \$1,048,000 raised in 1918 for the same, you will see that the increase is nearly *fifty-fold*.

If you will go still farther and add the sums found today in the church's budget, the increase in totals is enormous. And if we could estimate the worth of the awakened interest in all the work of the Church, both at home and abroad, there is ground for profound thanksgiving to God.

I have lived to see the old Conference grow, not with "leaps and bounds," but as the oak grows; the strong, vital, internal experience compelling the external expansion. I have heard the fathers urge experimental religion and watching unto prayer, and then fall at the post of duty, leaving the Church dismayed at the loss, and appalled at the magnitude of the task left them to carry on by these men of faith. Nevertheless, "armed with the same faith," the stricken Church picked up the burden, and holding high the standard of righteousness, swept on to fields awaiting the same consecrated effort the fathers had shown.

The soundness of our fundamental doctrines has been tested for more than one hundred and fifty years. We can challenge any church which holds the fundamentals of Christianity to gather about our altar and unite with us in the evangelization of the world. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

The adjusting of our polity to meet emergencies has been the story of our Church from the beginning. John Wesley was our teacher and exemplar. He taught his preachers to conquer success at every cost except that of sound doctrine and a holy life, and wherever we have carried out this instruction we have won our way through bitter opposition, and in spite of foes without and backsliders within our ranks. We have girded the earth with our stations, and fired the hearts of millions with the assurance of a present salvation, and the hope of an unending life hereafter. We have provoked others by our zeal, and many of them have dropped unworkable theories of salvation (howbeit,

they still keep these relics of an exclusive age in neglected books on dusty shelves) and have gone out into the highways and hedges for the lost, and are pressing us hard in numbers and occasions for jubilee.

I have lived to see the intense Calvinist and the decorous churchman set on fire by the triumphal march of the Methodist circuit-rider, call sinners to repentance with consuming earnestness on the Arminian text, "Whosoever will," as the basis of appeal, and announce the hymn of universal invitation,

"Ho, every one that thirsts, draw nigh,  
'Tis God invites the fallen race";

and asserting property rights in the hymn as if it had not been written by one of the Brothers Wesley, the founders of Methodism.

I have seen great circuits divided, and have heard faithful men on official boards cry out "Shameful," and warn the Presiding Elder not to send a man down that way to starve. And I have lived to see these "fearful saints fresh courage take," and "the clouds they so much dreaded break in blessings," on their dear old heads and loyal hearts.

The world is very beautiful, and life is very sweet to me now. The children and the grandchildren of the faithful, whom I served in the early days of my ministry, greet me at every turn. The girls have grown to womanhood, and in many cases have become mothers, and the boys have become men; have given themselves to Christ and His Church, and are telling the story of salvation in better form than they learned it from me in the days of my youth. I have met these boys and girls everywhere reaping the rich harvest of a life lived for Christ, and taking care, in some instances, to tell me what my pastoral oversight has been worth to them.

Isn't life worth living when one has seals to one's ministry such as these?

As I approach the end of my lifelong task, and must, ere long, stand before the judgment seat of Christ, I would leave with you this word:

The so-called literary world is torn with problems of its own making. It has dared to intrude with unhallowed feet where no path will ever lead it to the Holy of Holies. The old gospel is still popular. If you do not believe it, read Dr. Pell's book on "Our Troublesome Religious Problems." If this does not satisfy, try, in the strength of God, the fundamentals of our faith on the multitude. "Preach the Word." There are no problems His message has not already solved for the faith that takes Him at His word. Do not try to demonstrate the validity of the Truth as revealed in the Bible. Challenge men to test the Truth by faith and obedience. The Holy Spirit will demonstrate: your mission is to proclaim, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." His Incarnation, His Resurrection, and His Ascension are not open questions; you are to declare them as finalities—the Spirit will take care of results. He has "prepared mansions" for men of faith. "If it were not so, I would have told you," is the last word of His challenge.

"In Him is Life, and the Life is the Light of men." The Father has said, "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him." Preach Him to all, and He "will be with you to the end of the ages."



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